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General Assembly
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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 15 April 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

As the Security Council is set to hold yet another open debate next week to discuss the "Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine question", one characteristic remains the same: Israel, the occupying Power, continues to flagrantly flout international law and violate the inalienable and most basic human rights of the Palestinian people under its occupation throughout the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, with total impunity. In particular, one feature of the occupation that has gone unchanged over the nearly five decades of occupation is that the occupying Power has continued to illegally confiscate and colonize Palestinian land in grave breach of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Despite the widespread condemnations and calls by the international community to reverse and halt its building of settlements on the territory it illegally occupies, the occupying Power, before the eyes of the world, continues to carry on and openly persist with this war crime. This has been the case both during the time of the so-called peace process, in which the Palestinian people witnessed Israel's extremist settler population nearly triple, and in times of conflict and unrest. The recent period has been no different. In fact, according to the Israeli organization Peace Now, the building of illegal Israeli settlements was up by 250 per cent in the first quarter of 2016 compared to the same period last year.

Moreover, Peace Now stated that from January to March this year, the Israeli Government pushed forward plans for building 674 settlement units in illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This is compared to 194 settlement units in the first quarter of 2015. The latest announcement of illegal settlement building came just this past Wednesday, 13 April 2016, when the occupying Power revealed that it has decided to move forward with the construction of at least 250 new illegal settlement units in various areas throughout Occupied Palestine, including in East Jerusalem. Clearly, this illegal and destructive campaign

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continues to cast serious doubts on the prospects for the two-State solution as Israel, the occupying Power, appears to be doing all it can to destroy the goal of two States living side by side in peace and security through continued settlement construction, despite the firm Palestinian and global commitment to this solution.

The time is overdue for the international community to put an immediate end to Israel's colonial enterprise in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Actions must be taken to uphold the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice to bring the occupying Power into compliance with its legal obligations. In particular, while recalling the many Security Council resolutions directly addressing this crime, including resolutions 446 (1979), 452 (1979), 465 (1980) and 478 (1980), we call on the Security Council to act in unison in calling on the occupying Power to halt its settlement enterprise, since it is clearly acknowledged that settlements pose the biggest challenge to a peaceful settlement.

Moreover, it is not only Israel's illegal settlement enterprise that continues to violate international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people. The occupying Power also persists with all of its other policies and measures against the defenceless Palestinian population, which include, among many other things, the killing and injuring of innocent Palestinian civilians, among them women and children. In this regard, since October 2015, Israeli occupying forces have killed over 200 Palestinian civilians, including scores of children, and have injured more than 15,000 Palestinians. Moreover, the occupying Power continues to employ measures of collective punishment against the entire Palestinian population living under its ruthless military occupation. This includes the illegal and immoral blockade of the Gaza Strip, in which almost 2 million civilians are suffering from a dire socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis deliberately caused by the occupying Power. Moreover, in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, measures of collective punishment, such as home demolitions, curfews, checkpoints and closures, not only continue but are also on the rise.

While it is impossible to record every single crime perpetrated daily by the Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers against the Palestinian people, in addition to the above, the list below is a compilation of many crimes in the recent period:

9 April 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained four Palestinians and summoned four others from across the West Bank.
- Israeli naval boats shot heavy machine gunfire on Palestinian fishermen sailing offshore of the northern Gaza Strip.
- Israeli occupying forces shot machine gunfire at Palestinian shepherds in Gaza.

10 April 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 10 Palestinians, including a journalist, during raids across the West Bank.

11 April 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 19 Palestinians, including two minors, and summoned two others from across the West Bank.
- Extremist Israeli settlers resumed their provocative tours to Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem, amid calls by extremist Jewish organizations for mass visits to the holy site.

12 April 2016

- Israeli occupying forces demolished three homes in the village of Al-Waljeh, to the north-west of Bethlehem, under the dubious pretext of "construction without a permit".
- Israeli occupying forces detained 20 Palestinians, including two minors, from the West Bank and Gaza.
- Israeli occupying forces destroyed a playground, which was used as a children's park, in Za'tara, a small village to the south of Nablus.
- Israeli occupying forces reclosed with cement cubes the entrance to the village of Aqraba, to the south of Nablus.

13 April 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 13 Palestinians during pre-dawn raids in Nablus, Al-Khalil, Tulkarm, Bethlehem and Jerusalem.
- Israeli settlers stormed the village of Kherbet Tana, south-east of Nablus, harassing Palestinian civilians. About 20 Palestinian students suffocated as Israeli occupying forces fired tear gas canisters at a girls' school in Jaba' town, south of Jenin.

14 April 2016

- Israeli occupying forces destroyed a Palestinian-owned charcoal facility in the village of Barta'a, to the south-west of Jenin.
- Israeli occupying forces detained 30 Palestinians, including a girl, 2 boys and 11 elderly persons, during extensive pre-dawn raid campaigns across the West Bank.
- Israeli occupying forces raided and burned down a Palestinian-owned currency exchange shop in central Al-Bireh.
- Israeli occupying forces raided the campuses of two Palestinian primary schools in the town of Al-Khader, to the south of Bethlehem.
- Israeli occupying forces demolished a rainwater harvesting well near Al-Arroub refugee camp, north of Al-Khalil.
- Israeli occupying forces shot and killed Ibrahim Mohammed Baraz'iyeh (age 45) near Al-Arroub refugee camp in Al-Khalil.

The continuation of such illegal policies and measures are clearly exacerbating the volatile situation on the ground and heightening tensions between the two sides. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held to the same standards as all other States and comply with international law, and cannot continue to be absolved of its legal obligations. In this regard, we reiterate that Israel, the occupying Power, must be held fully accountable in accordance with international law and the principles of justice for all of its violations and for its continuing obstruction of peace. Moreover, we also reiterate our appeal for protection for the Palestinian people in accordance with international humanitarian law. This is imperative to save lives and to salvage the minimal prospects for peace before us, and the international community, particularly the Security Council, has clear responsibilities in this regard that must be upheld in all seriousness and without delay.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 583 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 8 April 2016 (A/ES-10/719-S/2016/332), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the
State of Palestine to the United Nations